Singapore College of Islamic Studies

Building the Foundations

Singapore College of Islamic Studies

Building the Foundations

CONTENT

PREFACE

Muslims in Singapore have made immense progress in the socio-religious sphere, in balancing between spiritual needs and teachings, and contributing to the common good. This achievement has been made possible through the building of robust institutions that do not only support the religious needs of the community in the present, but that prepare them for a more complex and uncertain future. Mosques, madrasahs and Asatizah have all played significant roles in advancing our understanding and practice of Islam to what it is today – an expression of a dynamic and living faith that constructively engages with contemporary issues and challenges.

We are now at the precipice of another major milestone and chapter in the religious life of the Singapore Muslim community – the establishment of the Singapore College of Islamic Studies (SCIS). It is the fulfilment of a long-held dream and aspiration of the Muslim community, which is to have our own institution of higher learning that completes the pathway of Islamic learning provided by the full-time madrasahs. Although generations of students have studied at renowned universities and institutes of Islamic higher learning overseas, there is immense potential and a profound purpose to have our own institution based in Singapore that is well-connected to renowned institutions abroad.

Every country and community has its unique context and environment that shapes and influences the nature of its socio-religious challenges. Key in addressing such challenges is the guidance, both in substance and form, given by religious scholars and leaders of the community. Dealing with our own challenges remains our own unique responsibility. As challenges become more complex and multi-faceted, the earlier we prepare our scholars and leaders, the better. As in many other disciplines and professions, university education at the undergraduate level is key in preparing future generation of scholars and leaders.

It is also with this in mind that the Committee on Future Asatizah (COFA), set up in 2019 to study the future landscape for Asatizah, recommended the establishment of a 'credible, world-class institute of higher learning offering undergraduate and/or postgraduate programmes in the Islamic religious

PREFACE

sciences.' Such an institution would aim, first and foremost, to nurture Asatizah who are well-versed in the religious and non-religious sciences and disciplines, and are capable of providing relevant guidance to the community while fostering social harmony and religious resilience in an increasingly globalised world.

With Singapore's reputation and global brand in education, the SCIS is in a good position to build partnerships both locally and internationally, to enhance its quality and strengthen its credibility. By leveraging the best systems and approaches in tertiary education whilst deepening the learning of Islam as faith, culture and tradition, the SCIS will be able to offer an Islamic education that is unique in the modern context.

The uniqueness of this project also means that it requires extensive consultation and a lot of learning from others who have pursued similar projects elsewhere. Muis has visited many institutions around the world, spoken with many academics in the field of Islamic studies, and consulted local universities and institutions and their experts, before deciding to establish the college and offer an undergraduate degree in Islamic Studies. We are also appreciative of the government's support for this project, as announced by Prime Minister Lawrence Wong, during his National Day Rally 2024[1] and at the M3 Forum on 10 November 2024.[2]

The SCIS is not just about setting up a new educational institution. It symbolises something more significant in the journey of our Muslim community in its socio-religious life, one that is

characterised by resilience, courage and *semangat bergotong-royong* (togetherness). It will be an institution from which we draw strength through intellectual rigour and spiritual resilience, to confront great challenges of the present and in the future.

This booklet documents our first steps in this journey to build the foundations for the SCIS. As we document the thinking, planning and achievements along the way, it is our hope that this will inspire us and our stakeholders and partners to see this project to its fruition. ■

To God belong all praises, and in Him we seek guidance.

Dr Nazirudin Mohd Nasir
Mufti of Singapore
1 January 2025

[1] National Day Rally, 18 August 2024, https://www.pmo.gov.sg/Newsroom/National-Day-Rally-2024-Malay.

[2] M3 Forum 2024, 10 November 2024, https://www.pmo.gov.sg/Newsroom/National-Day-Rally-2024https://www.pmo.gov.sg/Newsroom/PM-Lawrence-Wong-at-M3-Forum-2024.

SHAPING THE RELIGIOUS LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY

TRADITIONS OF LEARNING

■ The emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge (*'ilm*) and its virtues in Islam cannot be overstated. This forms the core of the Islamic faith and practice. This process began, in earnest, with the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ receiving the first revelations of God directly from the angel Gabriel (*Jibril 'alaihis salam*) and thereafter, teaching his followers their new faith.[3] The learning and teaching of Islam have continued until this day, in various forms and styles and through various structures and institutions, which have collectively formed the vast spectrum and corpus of Islamic thought developed over centuries. Muslim societies set up their own institutions to continue this tradition of learning and teaching, as part of commitment to their faith, and to ensure its continuity in their own communities.

Madrasahs were set up for this purpose, including those in Singapore in the early twentieth century. [4] The Islamic studies taught in the madrasahs

وَقُل رَّبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا

But say, O my Lord, increase me in knowledge.
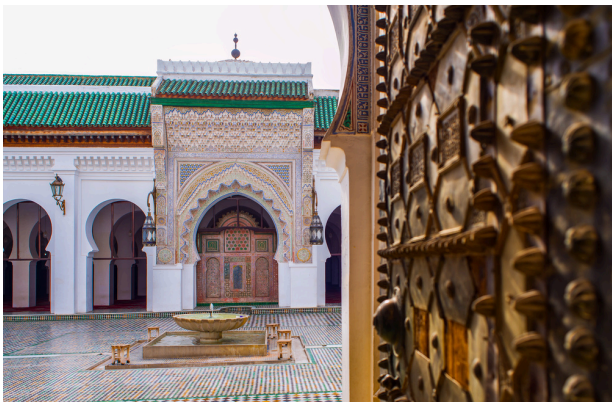
[Surah Taha, 20:114]

[3] Hadith Jibril a.s. "That is Jibril, he came to teach you your religion". Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj, *Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Iman* (Book of Faith), Hadith No. 1.

[4] On the history, function and evolution of madrasahs in Singapore, see Norshahril Saat, ed., Fulfilling the Trust: 50 Years of Shaping Muslim Religious Life in Singapore, Singapore: World Scientific, 89-109.
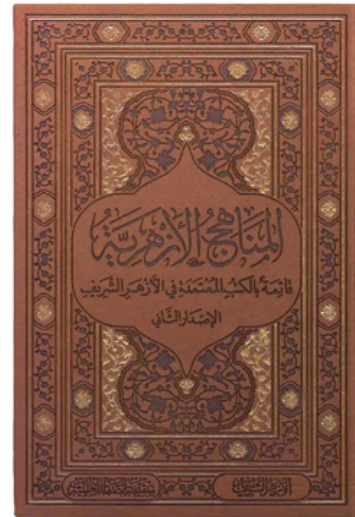
TRADITIONS OF LEARNING

are largely intended and designed to focus on the basics and foundations, to equip students with the necessary knowledge to pursue further in-depth and specialised learning required to reach the status of *'alim* or scholar. Many traditional seats of Islamic learning were established with this purpose in mind, in medieval Muslim cities and towns like Cairo in Egypt (Al-Azhar), Fez in Morocco (Al-Qarawiyyin), and Tunis in Tunisia (Al-Zaytunah).[5] In the modern period, such specialised learning has evolved into full-time programmes in universities that usually culminate in an undergraduate bachelors degree qualification.

The teaching of religious disciplines in Islamic institutions relates to a broader, and often, less clearly articulated idea or vision of Islam embodied in, and propagated by the institutions. This vision is usually drawn from the context of the practice of Islam in a particular time and place, and naturally relates to the socio-political culture of the institutions themselves. Throughout history, Islamic studies has taken numerous forms and

"The Al-Azhar Curriculum: Directory of Reference Texts Used at Al-Azhar Al-Sharif" (Second Edition)

shapes, and has been driven by various motivations, ideologies and orientations. The forces that shape all of these are multiple and often intertwined – individual pieties, communities and their interests and priorities as well as politics and governance. In sum, Islamic studies does not take place in a vacuum – it is often intertwined with the broader and deeper undercurrents that texturise learning, influence discourse, and determine the future of the graduates.

Graduates will need to navigate their own world of lived realities to make sense of the Islamic

---

[5] Qasim Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002, 60-61. On these institutions, see Sari Hanafi, *Studying Islam in the Arab World: The Rupture Between Religion and the Social Sciences*. New York: Routledge, 15-21.

Al-Qarawiyyin University, Fez, Morocco

studies as taught and learnt, and to figure out ways to fit in and function well in their respective societies. Where gaps exist between theory as taught in lecture theatres or classrooms and practice in society, students may encounter challenges to adjust and adapt. Not that this is impossible to achieve, but the better option from an educational perspective has to be the alignment between the context of Islamic studies and the graduates' lived realities. To do so, Islamic studies needs to be continuously adjusted to address the ideological motivations and to minimise gaps between theory and practice. More critically, the key is to address such issues within the education system, and not outside of it.

At the same time, the design of Islamic studies with a keen eye and emphasis on its applied, practical and contextual dimension does not need to come at an expense of the robustness and rigour of Islamic content. In fact, on the contrary, this approach returns Islamic studies to its original and most fundamental intent, which is to prepare religious scholars (*'ulama*) to guide their communities effectively and with wisdom.[6] This cannot be achieved unless students are adept at using tools and methods to interpret the sacred sources of Islam to apply them to real life challenges and situations. The balance of mastery of both 'texts' and 'contexts' (*fiqh al-nusus and fiqh al-waqi'*) is absolutely critical to the right practice of Islam and to the success of any contemporary Islamic studies programme.[7]

The idea of the Singapore College of Islamic Studies was born out of this practical imperative – that the training of Muslim scholars of the religion

ought to be conceptualised and designed with a clear practical purpose in mind. Their mission is to help in the progress of their communities in this world, guided by the values and principles of the faith, and to be able to constructively engage with, and contribute to the shaping of, contemporary and future challenges. In fact, this is considered as the most important competency in the survey conducted by the COFA in 2019, which is the ability to contextualise Islamic knowledge for the Singapore Muslim community.[8]

This sets out a distinct ideology of Islamic studies for our times – one that is rooted to a specific context (i.e. religious, social, cultural and political), yet never loses its connection to its intellectual heritage, and remains guided by the spiritual paradigm of the Muslim faith and its values, and

---

[6] *Surah An-Nahl*, 16:125

[7] Ahmad al-Raysuni and Muhammad Jamal Barout. *al-Ijtihad: al-Nass, al-Waqi', al-Maslahah* [*Ijtihad: Text, Context, and Public Interest*]. 1st ed. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr al-Muʿāṣir, 2000.

[8] *Strengthening Religious Leadership for a Community of Success: Report from the Committee on Future Asatizah.* Singapore: Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura, 2020, 24.

respects the cultures of contemporary Muslim communities. This balance between tradition and modernity is not a new quest, but one that remains as delicate and contested as ever, as is reflected in the diverse approaches to Islam and Islamic studies.[9]

At its core is the set of religious values and principles that provides important moral and spiritual compass for contemporary Muslim communities. Yet, they have often been obscured by a misplaced emphasis on other peripheral or secondary dimensions of the religion, but misunderstood as the fundamentals. This has proved to be a major inhibition for Muslims to progress and confidently meet the demands of contemporary contexts. Religious values and principles have an empowering effect – they root Muslims in the practice of their faith but afford them the flexibility to adjust where necessary, in order to achieve the higher objectives set out by the religion.[10]

It is in the context as set out above that Singapore puts forth a vision of Muslim religious life, one that needs to be supported by its own institutions, including its own college of Islamic studies.

[9] The plurality of Islamic thought is embedded in the existence of parallel Islamic institutions and structures of knowledge production, whose variegated approaches to reconciling the perennial tension between tradition and modernity often result in them being differentiated and essentialised. However, most have consistently been engaged in societal reforms and development globally. See Masooda Bano, ed., *Modern Islamic Authority and Social Change: Evolving Debates in Muslim Majority Countries*, vol. 1. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018.

[10] A major example is the *maqasid* approach, popularised by Abu Ishaq al-Shatibi (d.1388), building on the works of his predecessors, 'Izz al-Din ibn 'Abd al-Salam (d.1262) and Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali (d.1111), which has since become a significant hermeneutical tool in contemporary Islamic thought Muslim reformist thought. See Adis Duderija, ed., *Maqasid al-sharia and Contemporary Reformist Muslim Thought: An Examination*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

SINGAPORE MUSLIM RELIGIOUS LIFE

لاَ يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّى يُحِبَّ
لِلنَّاسِ مَا يُحِبُّ لِنَفْسِهِ

Your faith is incomplete until you love for everyone else what you love for yourself.

[Musnad Ahmad]

Over the course of more than fourteen centuries, Muslim societies have lived in diverse socio-cultural and political environments. The history of the Prophetic life and mission itself (*Al-Seerah al-Nabawiyyah*) contains different examples that serve as models for the different experiences of Muslim societies across time and space.[11] For example, the early phase in *Al-Seerah al-Nabawiyyah* is instructive for Muslims living as minorities, when the community of companions lived under the rule of the King Negus in Abyssinia. The Honourable Pact (*Hilf al-Fudul*) in Mecca, the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah (*Sulh al-Hudaibiyyah*) as well as the Constitution of Medina (*Sahifah al-Madinah*), amongst others, laid down the foundations for values that support peaceful social co-existence, such as honourable character, knowledge, competency, and citizenry.[12]

They also serve as important positive narratives that empower Muslims to adjust to new socio-political realities and co-exist harmoniously with others. At the heart is the principle that Islam as a living tradition and faith, has no inherent conflict with new systems of governance or new developments which uphold values that it too shares, such as fairness, justice and peace for all. [13] In other words, there is no fixed or ossified

---

[11] Ali Gom'ah, *Al-Namādhij al-Arbaʿah min Hady al-Nabī Ṣallá Allāh ʿAlayhi wa Sallam fī al-Taʿāyush* [*The Four Models from the Guidance of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) on Coexistence*]. 1st ed. Giza: Dār al-Fārūq, 2012.

[12] Juan Cole, *Muhammad Prophet of Peace Amid the Clash of Empires*. New York: Nation Books, 2018.

[13] *Surah Al-Mumtahanah*, 60:8.

socio-political template that defines and limits the conditions Muslims must live in or that calls for an outright rejection of all other conditions.[14] There is sufficient flexibility and space in the Islamic tradition that allows Muslim communities to make the necessary adjustments to live comfortably and contribute meaningfully in their respective societies.

Whilst there could be differences to political systems and approaches to governance, the core of the Islamic faith forms the constant that accords Muslims with a stable religious identity and character. As an example, the hadith of the Prophet ﷺ in the introduction to this section about desiring for others what we desire for ourselves, an act of utmost empathy, is enshrined as part of the act of faith itself. It demands of Muslims to embody this act in any context, including that of a diverse society, where Muslims live alongside non-Muslim neighbours and have interactions and relationships with non-Muslims.

One should not confuse these principles with specific forms of governance that had existed historically and are mistaken as the sole determinant of an authentic expression of the Muslim way of life.

Many Muslim communities today live in socio-political cultures that differ from those in the early periods of Islam often understood as coterminous with authenticity and legitimacy. Their success or otherwise, in such new contexts, depends on the extent to which they had been able to adjust and constructively engage with such new realities. Many socio-religious issues and challenges that they encounter in these environments are often without clear precedence in Muslim history.

Recent global developments such as pandemics and inter-communal tensions and strife that arise

[14] For example, see the argument of 'Ali Abdul Raziq, *Al-Islām wa Uṣūl al-Hukm* [Islam and the Foundations of Political Power]. Cairo: Maṭba'at Miṣr Sharikah Musāhimah Miṣrīyah, 1925.

SINGAPORE MUSLIM RELIGIOUS LIFE

from extremism and xenophobia, underscore the precarious state that communities may find themselves in, if issues relating to their religious identity and practice remains unresolved, or if they continue to be ambivalent towards responding to the challenges of the modern world.

In Singapore, Muslims form a religious minority community living alongside other communities, in a modern and secular city state. Singapore is considered one of the world's most religiously-diverse nations[15], but enjoys a high level of peace and harmony between its diverse communities.[16] This allows for the active participation of all communities and citizens in building and developing the society towards common goals. Muslims have been able to practice their faith but face a unique context with norms and cultures that may differ from Muslim communities elsewhere.

The Singapore Muslim Identity (SMI) initiative is an effort to articulate this unique identity. It is grounded in various attributes that encourage and guide Muslims to be forward looking, adaptive and

inclusive in their religious outlook.[17] During the Covid-19 pandemic at the turn of the decade, the Muslim community was united and resilient in making swift and necessary adjustments to social and religious norms to help contain the spread of the Covid-19 virus, even as their religious life was severely affected by the closure of mosques, postponement of Haj pilgrimage and social distancing during the Eid festivities, among others.

[15] A 2022 Pew Research Center survey noted that Singapore's religious diversity was "remarkable on a global scale." See Pew Research Center, "In Singapore, Religious Diversity and Tolerance Go Hand in Hand", October 6, 2023, https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/10/06/in-singapore-religious-diversity-and-tolerance-go-hand-in-hand/.

[16] Pew Research Center, "Buddhism, Islam and Religious Pluralism in South and Southeast Asia", September 12, 2023,https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2023/09/12/buddhism-islam-and-religious-pluralism-in-south-and-southeast-asia/.

[17] On the SMI and Singapore Muslim religious life, see *Fulfilling the Trust*, 264-266; Basma Abdelgafar. *Thriving In A Plural World: Principles And Values of The Singapore Muslim Community. Singapore*: Muis Academy, 2018.

SINGAPORE MUSLIM RELIGIOUS LIFE

Muslim communities living in a modern and pluralistic society like Singapore can continue to function successfully and contribute to the development of society and the nation without diminishing their religious identity as Muslims. This requires Muslims to work together with all segments of society to build robust and resilient institutions that can guide Muslims to thrive in a fast-transforming world whilst strengthening their social cohesion and active citizenry. ■

ROLES OF FUTURE RELIGIOUS SCHOLARS

> "
> وَإِنَّ الْعُلَمَاءَ وَرَثَةُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَإِنَّ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ لَمْ يُوَرِّثُوا دِينَارًا وَلَا دِرْهَمًا وَإِنَّمَا وَرَّثُوا الْعِلْمَ
> "
>
> *The learned ('ulama) are the heirs of the Prophets, for the Prophets do not leave behind wealth, but they leave behind knowledge.*
>
> [Abu Dawud and al-Tirmidhi]

Religious graduates traditionally function as educators and preachers in mosques, madrasahs and private institutions of Islamic learning. Over time, their role has significantly evolved in Singapore. Many religious graduates have taken up positions as administrators, public policy officers, translators, financial consultants and advisors, and counsellors. Some religious graduates have also been employed in tech and social media companies.

Whether as teachers or performing other roles, Asatizah today function as professionals, expected to hold the highest standards of integrity and character, and upgrade themselves with continuous learning. The Asatizah Recognition Scheme (ARS) plays an important role in the professionalisation process.[18] For example, under the ARS, Asatizah are required to pursue continuing education courses to maintain their accreditation status. These courses provide them with new skills and competencies that will enable them to pursue work beyond teaching religion.

As the community's socio-religious life advances further, there are many new areas of contribution required of religious graduates and scholars. In 2019, Muis set up the Committee on Future Asatizah (COFA) to study emerging areas which require the service and contribution of religious graduates. Insights from over 1,900 stakeholders, including senior religious scholars, professionals,

---

[18] On the ARS and its role in professionalising the Asatizah, see Muhammad Hannan Hassan and Irwan Mohd Hadi Shuhaimy, "Developing Asatizah in Singapore through the Asatizah Recognition Scheme" in *Fulfilling the Trust: 50 Years of Shaping Muslim Religious Life in Singapore*, ed. Norshahril Saat, 78-81.

ROLES OF FUTURE RELIGIOUS SCHOLARS

religious sector leaders, academics and youths, were sought and culminated in COFA's vision of future Asatizah:

01.

As religious leaders in a multi-cultural and diverse society, our Asatizah are well-regarded in proactively engaging with emerging issues of the modern world and connecting with other communities to build a cohesive Singapore society.

02.

As professionals, our Asatizah are advocates of lifelong learning, acquiring knowledge and skills in guiding Singapore Muslims to respond to contemporary challenges.

03.

As role models, our Asatizah are rooted to Islamic traditions, resilient, adaptable, compassionate, driven and committed to the betterment of the Singapore society.

(COFA Report 2020)

COFA also identified new areas of work where religious graduates are qualified to serve in, referred to as adjacent sectors. [See Figure 1] In sum, the role of religious scholars and graduates in strengthening the socio-religious sector is paramount. Some of the new possibilities where religious scholars and graduates could explore are as follows:

◆ **Religious thought leadership**

The challenges that Muslim communities face are becoming more complex and multi-faceted. These include issues specific to Muslims and more general challenges that affect the society at large. Some of these, such as climate change and the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), are existential in nature. Future religious scholars and graduates have an important role to engage with these challenges with courage, maturity and wisdom, drawing from the diverse traditions of Islam and its intellectual heritage, as well as with a good mastery of modern and contemporary disciplines and sciences.

Religious scholars and graduates are also needed for public policy making and administration. They are able to bring fresh perspectives on the intersection between faith and public policy, as it relates to Muslim community issues and challenges. This includes areas such as strengthening social cohesion, building relationships with other communities and their leaders, and many others.
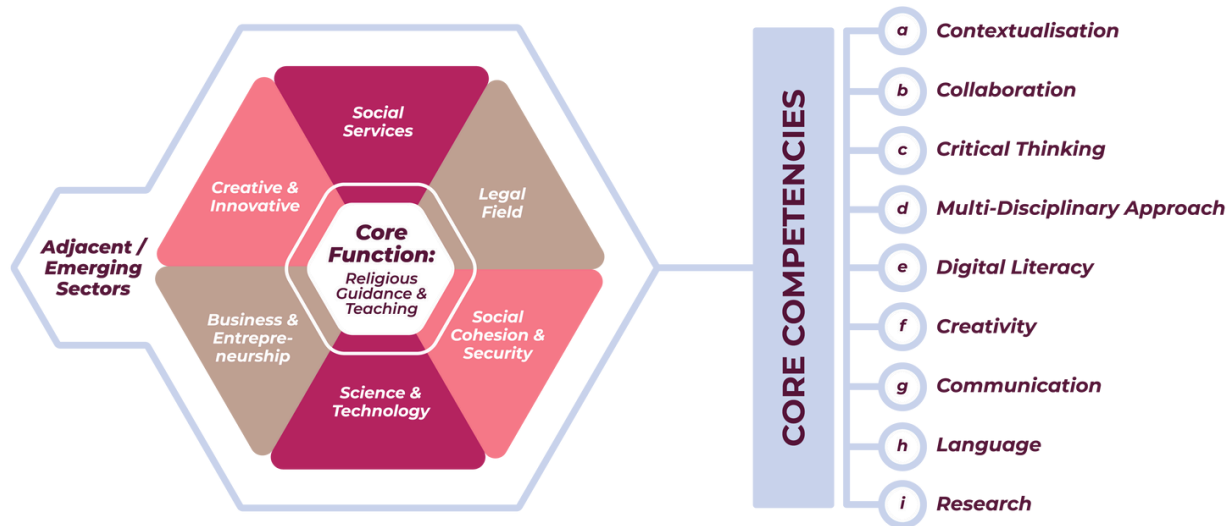
ROLES OF FUTURE RELIGIOUS SCHOLARS

Figure 1: Conceptual Representation of the Core and Potential Adjacent Sectors for Future Asatizah

◆ **Mosque planning and programmes**

Mosques have functioned effectively as places of worship as well as social development and support for the Singapore Muslim community. As the mosque sector advances further, there are many aspects that could be strengthened and added to improve the services offered to the community. These include infrastructure (space management and dealing with new challenges like climate change), religious education and programmes (content, pedagogy and outreach), chaplaincy and counselling, youth development, and support for the elderly and those with special needs. Roles for religious scholars and graduates in mosques are not confined to those of a religious nature alone, i.e. as Imams and/or preachers, and can be extended to the new areas mentioned above.

◆ **Islamic education – curriculum and pedagogy**

The provision of Islamic education is one of the most important roles for religious scholars and teachers. Islamic education requires continuous development, in terms of content and pedagogy, as society develops and challenges evolve over time. Religious scholars have an important role to play to develop the content and curriculum of Islamic studies to be relevant, updated, and engaging. Another major area is Islamic education and the engagement of the Muslim public in the online space and through social media. The content and approaches for each of this differs, and new and fresh methods are required to ensure they remain relevant.

ROLES OF FUTURE RELIGIOUS SCHOLARS

◆ Social service development

Social service is one of the important pillars of Muis' work. Every year, around 7000 families are supported through various Muis' financial support schemes. At the same time, many of these families require advice and counselling, including on religious matters. Social workers and social development officers with qualifications and training in the religious sciences can create additional impact on the kind and quality of service that such families receive, in particular, how to leverage religion and spirituality as potent forces to create positive changes in families, not as inhibitions to their growth and progress in society.

◆ Chaplaincy and interfaith engagement

Religious scholars and teachers have also served in a counselling role through various institutions in Singapore, such as the Religious Rehabilitation Group. Some have also served as docents for the Harmony Centre and are actively involved in interreligious work and dialogues, particularly through the Interreligious Community Circles.

ROLES OF FUTURE RELIGIOUS SCHOLARS

The training and preparation of religious scholars for these roles could be better streamlined and enhanced, and the structures to support them better developed, as these roles become more critical in the future. There are new opportunities in chaplaincy and interfaith work for religious scholars and graduates in this regard, particularly as social cohesion continues to be one of Singapore's key social priorities.

SINGAPORE COLLEGE OF ISLAMIC STUDIES

- *Where Character Leads*
- *Where Competencies Empower*
- *Where Disciplines Meet*
- *Where Boundaries of Learning Cross*
- *Where Students Aspire*

WHERE CHARACTER LEADS

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ ٱللَّهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَفَرْعُهَا فِى ٱلسَّمَآءِ ﴿٢٤﴾ (14:24)

At the core of the message and teachings of Islam is excellence in moral character. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ articulated his mission as one that seeks to complete noble character (Hadith Bukhari). The inculcation of such noble character in the life of a Muslim runs through all the teachings and practice of Islam. The SCIS approach to Islamic studies is dedicated to cultivating a worldview essential for the understanding and application of Islamic teachings and principles. This worldview is founded upon religious values that form the core of Islam as a global faith, gleaned from its scriptural sources and as exemplified in the life of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

As such, the curriculum will discuss more than just texts, rulings, doctrines and religious positions; it begins with the development of a holistic religious character in students and a profound understanding of the values that underpin the teachings of Islam. One of the outcomes expected of students is the embodiment of the values and principles of Islamic teachings in personal conduct and interactions, so that graduates can serve as role models to the Muslim community and others.

The curriculum will also require students to assess the ethical perspectives to issues and challenges and apply the appropriate ethical framework and considerations to problem solving and decision making.

> "The values embedded in Islamic education, and by extension, in the SCIS programmes, must cultivate critical thinkers capable of analysing and offering alternative perspectives, socially conscious *da'is* dedicated to community development and societal reform, and individuals with strong moral character."

Ustaz Pasuni Maulan
Chairman,
Asatizah Recognition Board

WHERE COMPETENCIES EMPOWER

The SCIS Islamic Studies curriculum focuses on the development of academic and professional competencies to empower students to engage effectively with different sources of knowledge and navigate complexities as well as contemporary and future challenges.

Students will be equipped with the necessary critical learning and thinking skills appropriate for the training and development of future religious scholars. These skills form the various lenses that students will utilise to approach their learning and incorporate the following:

01.

Linguistic skills that will enable students to engage with scripture and literary and contemporary texts, and interpret them as accurately as possible, as well as communicate effectively as leaders.

02.

Classical Arabic language, which gives students direct and unmediated access to classical Islamic texts. The applied nature of the SCIS programme means that students do not learn Arabic as independent language subjects, but rather as a tool and means for them to access the texts with accuracy. Students will be exposed to a wide range of texts written by classical scholars in the various disciplines. These include juristic literature, theological treatises, Quranic and and Hadith commentaries, historical works, and others.[19]

---
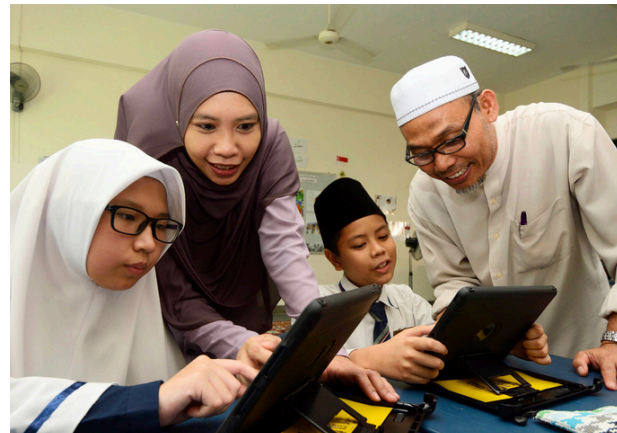
[19] The curriculum will draw on classical texts used in other Islamic universities, such as in Al-Azhar University. See *Al-Manahij Al-Azhariyyah Qaimah bil Kutub Al-Mu'tamadah fi Al-Azhar Al-Sharif* [The Al-Azhar Curriculum: Directory of Reference Texts Used at Al-Azhar Al-Sharif]. Cairo: Mashyakhah Al-Azhar, Malaysia: Saqifat Al-Safa Trust, 2018.

03.

Digital resources and generative Artificial Intelligence for the purposes of further study and research. Unlike in the past where students needed to manually search for a particular text or reference, students can access religious texts and literature digitally and study these texts comparatively and in a much shorter duration. ■

> "The integration of Digital Tools and AI can significantly enhance the learning experience for students at SCIS while equipping them with cutting-edge skills for the challenges and opportunities of the digital age. Specifically, it will provide students with unprecedented access to vast digital archives and facilitate innovative ways of visualizing and interpreting the Islamic intellectual tradition that speaks to the modern world.

Sheikh Mohamad Farouq
Associate Research Fellow,
Research Programme in the Study of Muslim Communities of Success (RPCS)

WHERE DISCIPLINES MEET

Traditional and classical Islamic studies include key disciplines such as jurisprudence (*Shari'a*), theology (*Usul al-din*), Qur'an, and Hadith.[20] Some of these disciplines have branched into new areas in recent times, such as the study of the *Shari'a* with the incorporation of the study of the *maqasid* (higher objectives).

From an applied perspective, issues and challenges that require religious guidance rarely, if ever so, stay in the confines of any particular discipline. Instead, they are complex and often multi-faceted and multi-dimensional. In other words, contemporary issues require the insights and perspectives of various disciplines coming together at once. The ability of an *'alim* to discharge competent and effective advice rests heavily on his or her ability to see across the disciplines, i.e. to see how, where, and why the different concerns and perspectives meet, on any particular issue.

As such, contemporary and applied Islamic studies require the different disciplines to converse with each other in a more porous and seamless manner. For example, whilst students will be able to delve deeper into traditional disciplines such as

fiqh, they do so in tandem with a conversation on various other disciplines with which *fiqh* interact, such as the social sciences.[21] The interdisciplinary

---

[20] The concept of 'traditional' or 'traditions' is not used in a negative sense of backwardness, but to refer to the disciplines of learning that originated in the past and had been passed down through generations of scholars and inherited. See Talal Asad, "The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam,"*Qui Parle 17*, no. 2 (2009). https://www.jstor.org/stable/20685738.

[21] On the relationship between the study of the Shari'a and the social sciences and the argument that the relationship is both necessary and possible, see Sari Hanafi, *Studying Islam in the Arab World: The Rupture Between Religion and the Social Sciences*.

WHERE DISCIPLINES MEET

approach is not limited to the field of Islamic studies alone. Contemporary and future issues require some degree of competence in other related disciplines, especially the social sciences when studying religion.

The SCIS method will focus on a thematic approach that allows various disciplines to meet and converse with each other, so that issues are examined in a more holistic and comprehensive manner. Examples of the kind of themes that will form the core of the SCIS curriculum are "God", "Family", "Society", "State and Governance", and "Science and Technology". [See Figure 2 for an example of the interdisciplinary nature of a theme]

> **Interdisciplinary learning is crucial for SCIS as it enables students to integrate Islamic sciences with other fields such as social sciences, law, psychology, economics, and technology. This holistic approach equips students to tackle complex modern challenges, contribute meaningfully to multicultural societies, and develop solutions that are both grounded in Islamic tradition and relevant to our rapidly evolving world.**

Ustazah Dr Siti Nur 'Alaniah
Lecturer,
Postgraduate Certificate in Islam in Contemporary Societies (PCICS)
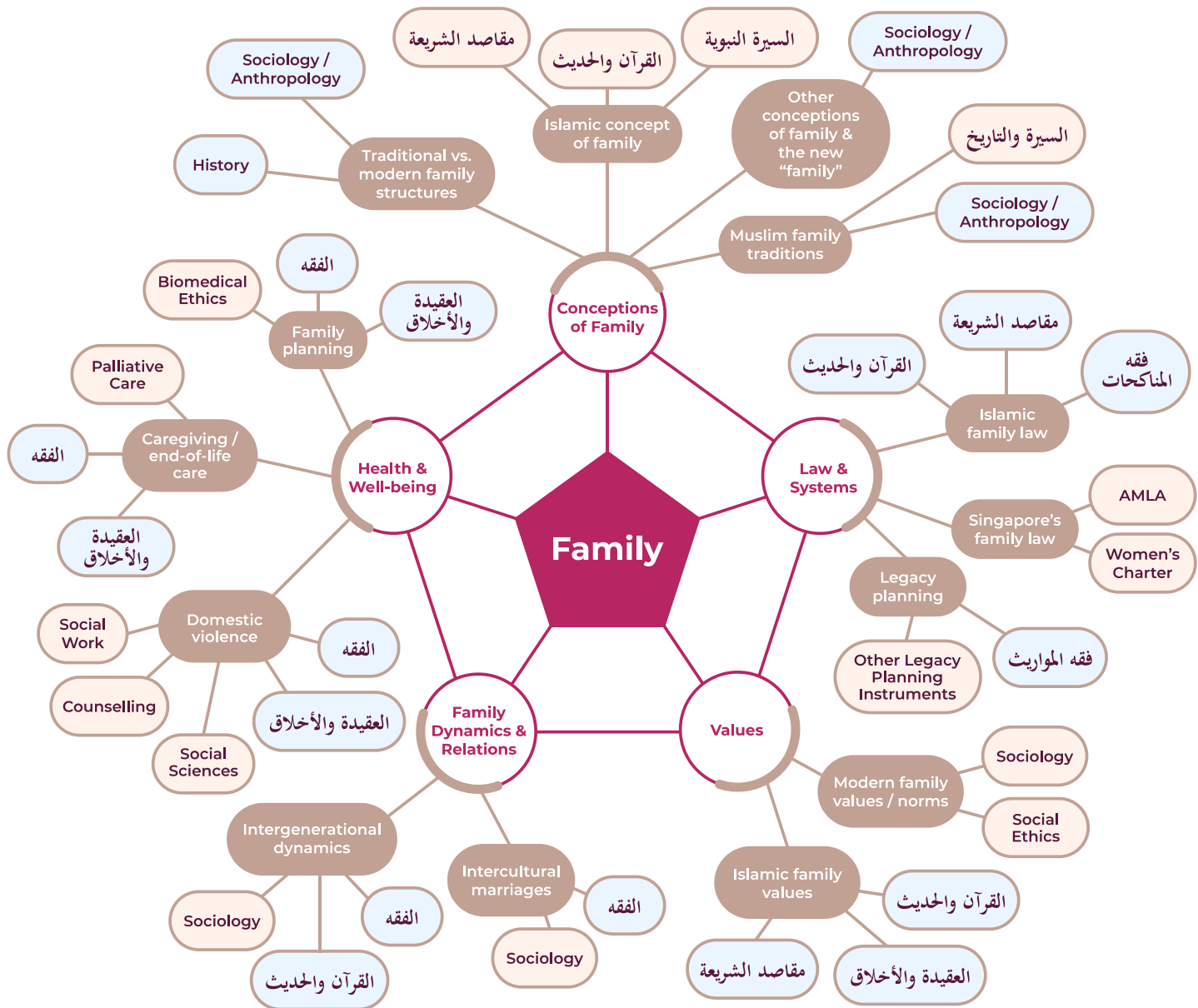
Figure 2: Mapping of the focus areas and interrelated disciplines under the theme "Family"

WHERE BOUNDARIES OF LEARNING CROSS

The SCIS has a strong applied focus. This also means that students will examine real-life issues and scenarios from day one. Subjects and disciplines in the SCIS curriculum are introduced not only through concepts, but also through problems, challenges and issues.

Using this approach, students should be able to contribute towards solving wicked problems and challenges with confidence and courage. Many of these problems are situated at the intersection of several disciplines and fields of knowledge. For example, the fatwa experience in dealing with new issues, such as lab-cultivated meat, are, in principle, about the issue of food sustainability in the face of worsening climate change. The question becomes no longer about the 'halalness' of meat alone, in terms of how the meat is acquired (whether through slaughter or not), but about its impact and usefulness in addressing a much larger problem for humanity with which Islam too is deeply concerned.

In thinking about such challenges and proposing solutions, students will need to consider multiple perspectives, dimensions and insights, and from different sources and epistemologies. In this regard, the concept of boundary crossing in learning to solve challenges is highly pertinent.[22]

To do this, the SCIS will leverage the relevant expertise in the community and globally. Experts and professionals in various disciplines will be able to share their experiences and lessons in engaging with real problems, and work with and advise SCIS

[22] One of the first institutions to propose and employ this approach to learning is the Wageningen University. See Wageningen University & Research, "Boundary-Crossing as Modus Operandi at Wageningen University," https://research.wur.nl/en/projects/boundary-crossing-as-modus-operandi-at-wageningen-university.

WHERE BOUNDARIES OF LEARNING CROSS

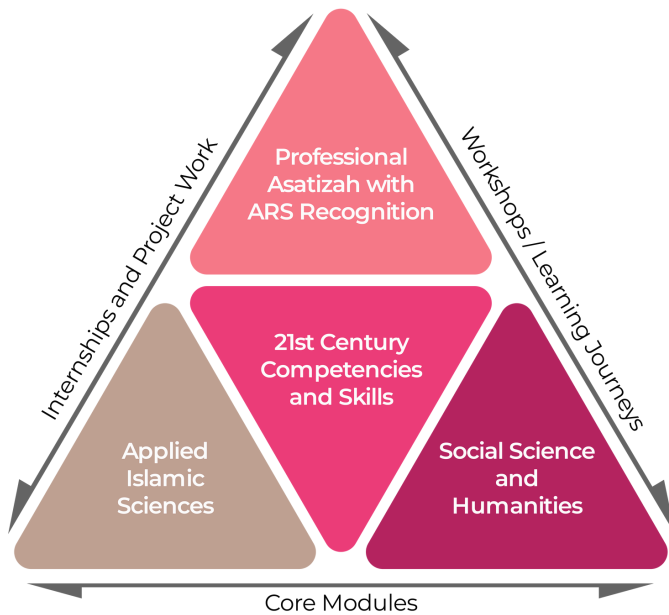students in their own efforts and initiatives to conceive and formulate creative solutions. ◼

Figure 3: An illustration of SCIS undergraduate programme pedagogy and approach

Internships and Project Work
Workshops / Learning Journeys

Professional Asatizah with ARS Recognition

21st Century Competencies and Skills

Applied Islamic Sciences

Social Science and Humanities

Core Modules

"**The boundary-crossing approach is crucial in addressing complex, multi-dimensional issues. It encourages interaction and the exchange of perspectives across various disciplines. This approach has greatly assisted the Fatwa Committee in discussing matters such as vaccination and CPF nomination, which require comprehensive insights from Islamic jurisprudence, legal frameworks, and socio-economic conditions of the community. It enables solutions that are holistic, grounded in Islamic principles, and responsive to contemporary realities. This approach is highly relevant for SCIS, where nurturing asatizah who can navigate multiple disciplines will empower them to provide principled, balanced, and contextually appropriate guidance to address the diverse needs of today's society.**"

Ustaz Fathurrahman Dawoed
Member, Fatwa Committee

WHERE STUDENTS ASPIRE

Student-centered learning is a well-accepted method in contemporary learning, and more so for tertiary education.[23] However, this is less so as a focus in the case of degree programmes for Islamic studies in faith-based institutions. Whilst there is a need to set and determine the breadth and depth of disciplines (particularly from the classical Islamic sciences) which students must be acquainted with through a formal programme of study, it is equally important to consider the students' own aspirations and expectations, especially as they begin to map out their own intellectual interests, career plans and options.

The degree programme should provide students with the flexibility and space to design their own specialisations and pursue different pathways that match their aspirations better. To this end, the SCIS programme will offer two major pathways, with further specialisations possible within each pathway. Some of the possible specialisations are as follows:

Fatwa Studies	Social Work
Hadith Studies	Counselling
Qur'anic Studies	Psychology
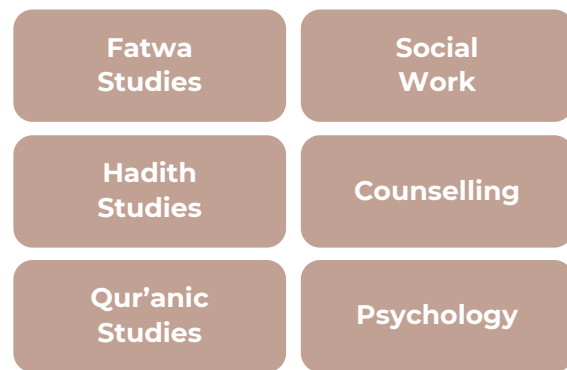
Figure 4: An illustration of possible SCIS undergraduate specialisations

Skills development is also an important and fully integrated component of the SCIS curriculum and experience. Such skills are transferable across disciplines and specialisations, and will prepare students for employment upon graduation. These skills are not taught as independent or separate modules, but are fully integrated into the topics that students are engaged in, and will be assessed throughout the programme appropriately. These

[23] Sabine Hoidn and Manja Klemenčič, eds. *The Routledge International Handbook of Student-Centered Learning and Teaching in Higher Education*. New York: Routledge, 2021.

WHERE STUDENTS ASPIRE

These skills include academic presentation and writing, research, collaboration, problem solving and media literacy, amongst many others.

> **I look forward to the establishment of the SCIS, as it will provide us with more opportunities to specialise in Islamic studies tailored to our Singaporean context, enriching our lives and making them more fulfilling.**

AbdurRahman Ali
Hifz Scholarship Recipient, Primary 6 student, Madrasah Irsyad Zuhri Al-Islamiah

> **This college offers me a pathway to advance my Arabic language studies locally. By studying here, I won't need to go abroad, which alleviates concerns about the costs associated with flights and overseas living expenses.**

Ahmad Nawfal Azman
Hifz Scholarship Recipient, Primary 6 student, Madrasah Irsyad Zuhri Al-Islamiah

> **The SCIS will allow me to combine my academic ambitions with my interest in Islamic studies, seeking a deeper understanding of Islam while pursuing my intellectual and professional goals. I am sure that the blend of Islamic principles and academic rigour at this college will equip me to make meaningful contributions to society. I believe that a strong educational foundation, rooted in Islamic values, will help me live a balanced life, guiding me to become not just a better student, but a better person in the service of Allah and the community.**

Nadra Sofea Bte Rozaini
Secondary 3 IB student, Madrasah Aljunied Al-Islamiah

UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE IN ISLAMIC STUDIES

The SCIS undergraduate degree programme in Islamic Studies is a 4-year applied programme that aims to nurture future-ready Asatizah who will serve as thought leaders for Singapore's Muslim community.

SCIS graduates will possess comprehensive skills and understanding inspired by the content and context of the Islamic intellectual heritage and embody values to provide relevant, compassionate, progressive and culturally competent religious leadership.

With an interdisciplinary and practical application approach to learning, SCIS students will emerge with both deep theoretical understanding and real-world skills, prepared to address contemporary and emerging socio-religious challenges and contribute meaningfully to the betterment of Singapore's Muslim community, the Singapore nation and the world at large.

The SCIS undergraduate programme aims to equip students with comprehensive knowledge of Islamic concepts, methodologies, and disciplines, including familiarity with key texts and scholars.

Students will develop proficiency in Arabic, gain insight into applying Islamic principles in minority-Muslim communities, and understand the intersections between Islamic sciences and other disciplines.

Students will also acquire skills in interpreting Islamic texts, utilising modern research tools, analysing complex challenges, and proposing practical solutions aligned with Islamic principles.

The programme fosters attitudes that balance rootedness in Islamic traditions with progressive approaches to contemporary issues. Students are encouraged to develop ethical conduct, cultural competence, and a commitment to lifelong learning.

UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE IN ISLAMIC STUDIES

The Islamic studies undergraduate curriculum aims to produce Islamic religious graduates who are able to:

01.

Read and interpret revelatory, classical and contemporary Islamic texts, as accurately as possible, to derive meaningful insights and applications for contemporary and future challenges.

02.

Comprehend and address intricate religious and societal challenges effectively by drawing upon the messages of the Quran and Sunnah and integrating diverse knowledge, skills and perspectives within the Islamic disciplines and from other fields.

03.

Research and critically evaluate Islamic sources to develop a deep understanding of religious principles and practices.

04.

Reflect on personal and societal beliefs, values, and practices, fostering a deeper understanding of Islamic teachings and their application in daily life.

05.

Adapt and contextualize Islamic teachings and values to diverse cultural and societal settings, fostering inclusivity and relevance.

06.

Engage in dialogues on modern-day issues and challenges, articulating Islamic concepts and principles with clarity and cultural sensitivity.

07.

Embody the values and principles of Islamic teachings in personal conduct and interactions, serving as role models to the Muslim community and others.

UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE IN ISLAMIC STUDIES

The programme employs learning-oriented assessment as a fundamental approach to the holistic development of its undergraduate students, recognising them as active participants in knowledge construction.

Assessment design in the programme primarily aims to support and advance students' learning, enabling them to analyse their thought processes, identify strengths and weaknesses, explore avenues for improvement and find solutions to emerging problems and issues within an Islamic context.

The programme incorporates effective formative assessment, using diverse methods for timely feedback, as a central component of its learning design. Meanwhile, transparent criteria and standards in summative assessments ensure fairness and validity whilst promoting a learning-oriented assessment paradigm that aligns with Islamic educational principles.

"The SCIS will not just support the development of religious character. It will also develop and nurture graduates who can meet the needs of the community effectively. The SCIS will do so by offering a full-time undergraduate degree programme and it will have dual tracks – students can choose to major in either Islamic Studies or Social Sciences. This will give students a foundation of knowledge to qualify them as asatizah. As well as practical skills to pursue careers in religious and adjacent sectors, like social work."

Prime Minister Lawrence Wong
M3 Forum, 10 November 2024

UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE IN ISLAMIC STUDIES

◆ **Degree Pathways**

All SCIS undergraduate students will read core modules on the Islamic and social sciences during their initial two years in the programme. Subsequently, students will choose one of two specialisation tracks: Islamic Studies track or Social Sciences track.

The Islamic Studies undergraduate curriculum will also prepare students to attain recognition and license under the Asatizah Recognition Scheme (ARS) that will

allow them to teach subjects in the field of Islamic Studies based on their qualification, capability and expertise.

Graduates of the programme will thus have the opportunity to serve in the religious sector and/or the adjacent sectors (such as the social service sector).
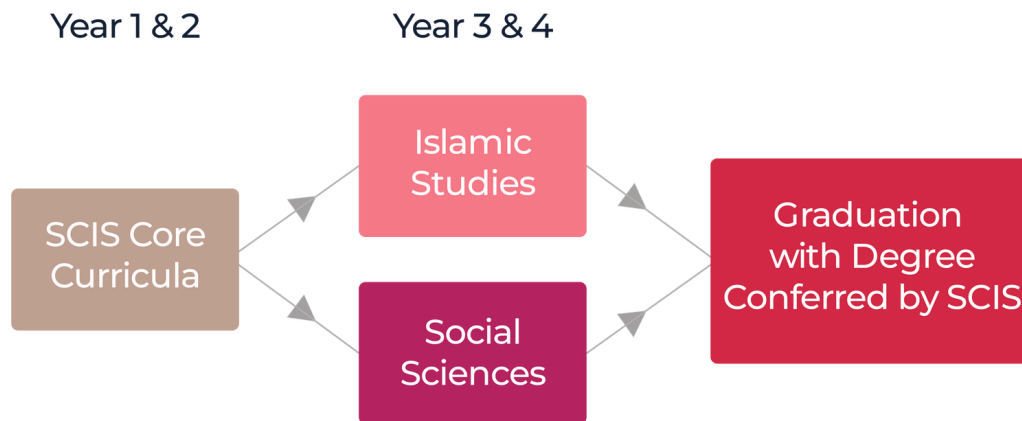
Year 1 & 2   Year 3 & 4

Islamic Studies

SCIS Core Curricula

Social Sciences

Graduation with Degree Conferred by SCIS

Figure 5: An illustration of SCIS undergraduate programme structure and its two specialisation tracks

UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE IN ISLAMIC STUDIES

◆ **Prospective Learners**

The new undergraduate degree programme will primarily cater to students who have completed 12 years of Islamic Studies education in Singapore's full-time madrasahs, ensuring a strong foundation in Islamic sciences. Other equivalent educational certificates will also be considered, where appropriate. Places will also be allocated to international students, to enrich and expand learners' appreciation of diverse Islamic traditions, cultural contexts, and approaches to contemporary challenges faced by Muslim communities worldwide.

◆ **Inaugural Cohort**

The college is set to receive its inaugural cohort in 2028, with application to open in 2027.

UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE IN ISLAMIC STUDIES

◆ **Partner Institutions**

Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS)

The Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS) is an autonomous university in Singapore that focuses on providing lifelong education to adult learners and professionals. SUSS offers a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in areas such as business, humanities, social sciences, and technology. The university is known for its flexible learning options, including part-time and full-time study modes, as well as its emphasis on applied learning and industry relevance. With a strong emphasis on lifelong learning, community engagement, and research that addresses societal challenges, SUSS aims to equip students with the skills and values needed to contribute meaningfully to society.

The partnership between SCIS and SUSS presents opportunities to foster interdisciplinary learning, cultural exchange, and networking between students from SCIS and SUSS. By sharing resources and expertise, the partnership aims to enrich the educational experience, develop well-rounded graduates, and enhance their adaptability and employability, equipping them to thrive in the modern world.

> **My hope is that SCIS will become a global model of Islamic higher education that maintains rigour in Islamic teachings, while also incorporating the applied social knowledge and methods that are crucial in our contemporary society. It is only in this way that Asatizah and other Muslim leaders can provide effective leadership and influence in a complex and disruption-prone world.**

Prof Robbie Goh
Provost,
Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS)

UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE IN ISLAMIC STUDIES

Al-Qarawiyyin University

Al-Qarawiyyin University, located in Fez, Morocco, is renowned as one of the oldest existing and continually operating Islamic universities in the world. Founded in 859 CE, it has been a beacon of learning for over a millennium, evolving from a madrasah into a state university in 1963. The institution is particularly esteemed for its Islamic studies and integration of Islamic traditional sciences with modern social sciences in an innovative way. This interdisciplinary approach allows for a nuanced understanding of contemporary issues through the lens of Islamic thought.

SCIS's partnership with Al-Qarawiyyin University presents opportunities to develop new paradigms in Islamic studies that are both deeply rooted in tradition and acutely relevant to contemporary societies. Additionally, this partnership offers SCIS students with unique learning experiences in a historically rich setting and opens doors for potential innovative research projects.

"

Singapore stands at a unique crossroads in Islamic higher education. With its commitment to academic excellence and its ability to bridge traditional and modern approaches, I believe Singapore is exceptionally positioned to pioneer a new path in Islamic studies. By fostering both creative and critical thinking, while embracing technological advancements, Singapore has the potential to make a fundamental and transformative impact on Islamic education globally.

"

Prof Driss Fassi Fihri
Vice President,
Al-Qarawiyyin University

UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE IN ISLAMIC STUDIES

University of Jordan (UJ)

The University of Jordan (UJ), established in 1962, is the oldest and one of the most prestigious higher education institutions in Jordan. Located in the capital, Amman, UJ offers a broad range of undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral programs across various disciplines, including arts, sciences, engineering, and business. The university is renowned for its academic excellence, research contributions, and strong ties with local and international institutions. It plays a key role in shaping the educational landscape of Jordan and the region, fostering innovation, critical thinking, and leadership in its students.

The partnership between SCIS and UJ offers SCIS students opportunities for Arabic language immersion and cultural exchange, enhancing their global competencies.

"

I eagerly anticipate the opening of the Singapore College of Islamic Studies (SCIS), an institution that will allow students to deeply engage with both Islamic and social sciences. In partnership with the University of Jordan's School of Shariah, SCIS will stand as a beacon of knowledge, virtue, and guidance. It will contribute to Singapore's spiritual, ethical, cultural, and intellectual renaissance by nurturing qualified scholars who will honour Singapore's diversity and pluralism and adeptly harmonize Islamic law with modern needs, fostering cooperation and benefitting society at large.

وَلْتَكُن مِّنكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى ٱلْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِٱلْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ ٱلْمُنكَرِ ۚ وَأُوْلَٰئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْمُفْلِحُونَ

Let there be a group among you who call others to goodness, encourage what is good, and forbid what is evil - it is they who will be successful (3:104)

Prof Dr Abdul Rahman Al-Kilani
Dean of the School of Shariah,
University of Jordan

UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE IN ISLAMIC STUDIES

Dar al-Ifta al-Misriyyah

Dar al-Ifta, a prominent institution in the Islamic world, is renowned for issuing fatwas and providing religious guidance to Muslims in Egypt and internationally. It is esteemed for its moderate approach in interpreting Islamic legal sources, considering the evolving needs of modern society. The institution offers a well-recognised Fatwa Studies Programme, known for its practice-based, applied, and multidisciplinary approach to Muslim law. Dar al-Ifta's global reputation is further enhanced by its Grand Mufti's role as the President of the General Secretariat for Fatwa Authorities Worldwide.

The partnership between Dar al-Ifta and SCIS offers unique opportunities for SCIS students and graduates. We hope that through the collaboration with Dar al-Ifta, SCIS graduates can gain advanced standing in Dar al-Ifta's Professional Diploma Programme in Fatwa Studies, further enhancing their educational and professional prospects in Islamic jurisprudence.

> **Our common religious and human responsibilities call upon us to strengthen cooperation and important collaboration in order to spread peace and stability. Dar al-Ifta will give its full support to Singapore's effort in this regard, in particular, to establish the Singapore College of Islamic Studies and to strengthen the fatwa studies in the college. We see this as part of cooperation that will help in strengthening the noble Islamic values in our societies.**

H.E. Dr Nazir Mohamed Ayyad
Grand Mufti of Egypt,
Dar al-Ifta al-Misriyyah

KEY MILESTONES

◆ *Postgraduate Certificate in Islam in Contemporary Societies (PCICS)*

◆ *Communities of Success (COS)*

◆ *International Conference on the Communities of Success (ICCOS)*

◆ *Research Programme in the Study of Muslim Communities of Success (RPCS)*

POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN ISLAM IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETIES (PCICS)

The Postgraduate Certificate in Islam in Contemporary Societies (PCICS) programme, established by Muis in 2020, aims to nurture confident, compassionate, and competent professional Asatizah. This initiative addresses the COFA recommendations to enhance fresh graduates' contextualisation skills, career development, and work-based experiences. The programme's holistic curriculum balances religious and social sciences, fostering critical-creative thinking and equipping Asatizah with 21st-century competencies. It emphasises a deep understanding of Singapore's societal context and Islam in the Southeast Asian/Nusantara region, promoting lifelong learning and sustainable self-development through a student-centric approach.

PCICS modules are designed to apply critical thinking to religion, religious traditions, and contemporary social developments both locally and globally. The programme engages students with a broad range of literature on religion, particularly from humanities and social sciences perspectives. Delivered in partnership with Al-Azhar University, University of Jordan, Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS), and the National University of Singapore (NUS), PCICS has enrolled over 350 students across 10 cohorts since 2020. Graduates of this programme qualify as Tier 1 Asatizah under Singapore's Asatizah Recognition Scheme (ARS), further validating their expertise and readiness to provide relevant religious guidance in a diverse, plural, and interconnected postmodern world.
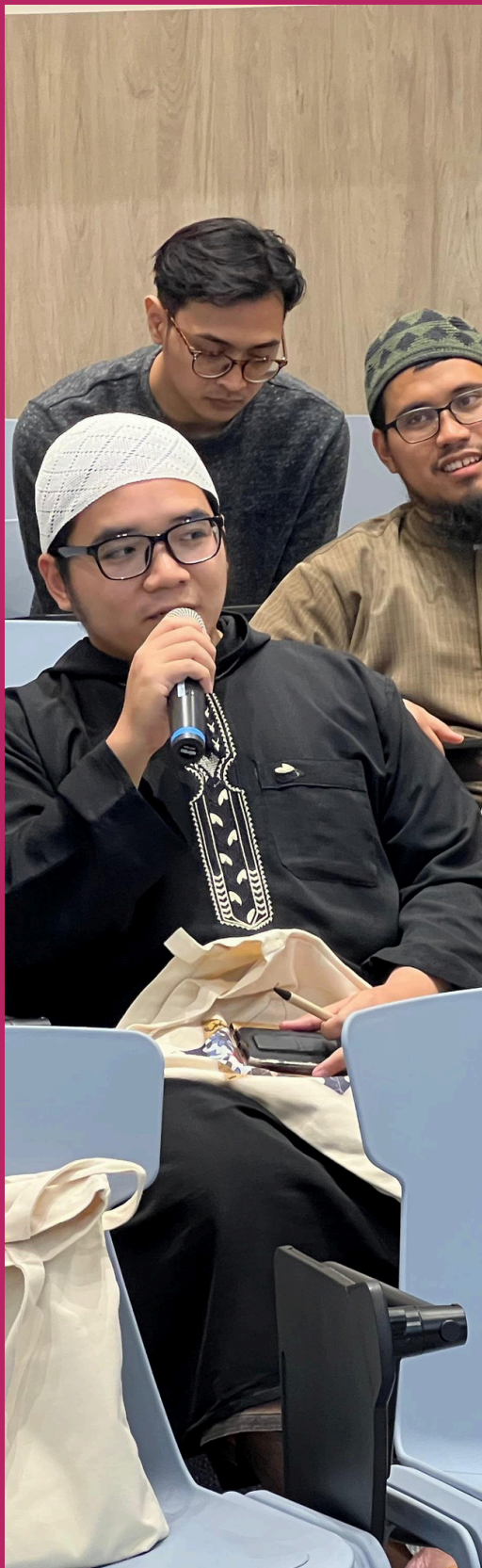
MUSLIM COMMUNITIES OF SUCCESS (COS)

The Communities of Success initiative, launched by the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (Muis), presents a progressive vision of Islam and Muslim communities thriving in and contributing to modern, diverse societies, particularly within secular political contexts. This initiative is crucial given the unprecedented socio-religious challenges faced by Muslims in such environments.

In response to these complex issues, Muis has implemented various programmes, including the International Conference on Communities of Success (ICCOS) and the Research Programme in the Study of Muslim Communities of Success (RPCS). These efforts aim to foster progressive religious leadership and develop new, contextualised knowledge bases, addressing the unique needs of Muslim communities in contemporary settings like Singapore.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON COMMUNITIES OF SUCCESS (ICCOS)

The International Conference on Communities of Success (ICCOS) brings together global Muslim minority communities to discuss and develop positive narratives of successful communities characterised by good **Character**, **Competency** and **Citizenry**.

It aims to foster progressive religious leadership and create contextualised knowledge to address complex socio-religious challenges. ICCOS emphasises collaboration among religious scholars, state officials, and community leaders in developing thriving Muslim communities in contemporary settings.

RESEARCH PROGRAMME IN THE STUDY OF MUSLIM COMMUNITIES OF SUCCESS (RPCS)

The Research Programme in Communities of Success (RPCS) aims to develop new knowledge addressing the challenges faced by Muslim communities in secular countries and advanced economies. It seeks to elevate critical thought leadership among religious scholars and leaders, providing a platform for potential apex religious leadership. The programme articulates a forward-looking vision of Islam that thrives in and contributes to contemporary societies, complementing the PCICS and undergraduate curricula by informing tertiary curriculum development and growing a pool of local teaching faculty. RPCS's research agenda encompasses three broad areas: governance, society, and science and technology.

To achieve its objectives, RPCS organises roundtable discussions, workshops, and seminars, inviting speakers to engage with local Asatizah and key stakeholders on topics relevant to Muslim Communities of Success. These events align with the programme's goal of developing new horizons of knowledge, leading to contemporary and innovative bodies of understanding. Through these activities, RPCS fosters an intellectual environment where scholars, thinkers, and leaders can thrive, contributing to the growth and adaptation of Islamic thought in modern contexts.
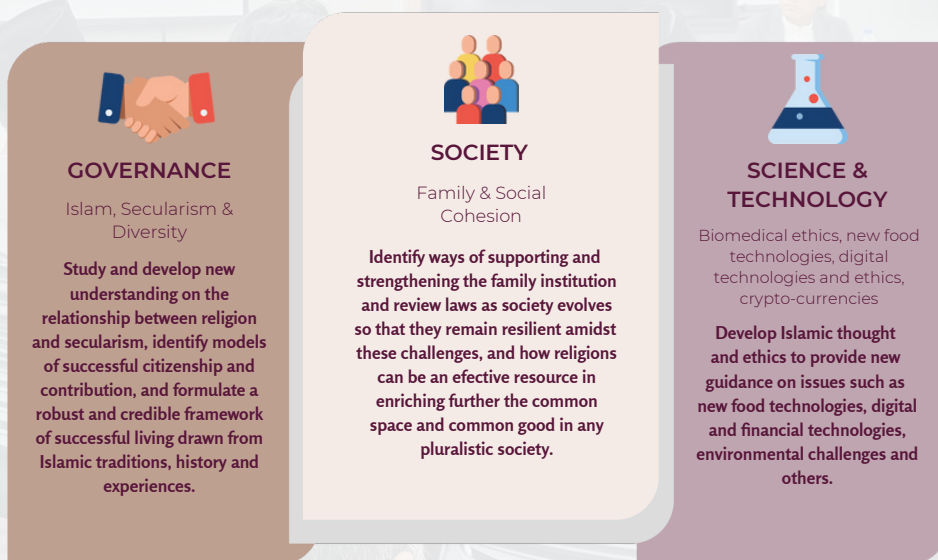
GOVERNANCE

Islam, Secularism & Diversity

Study and develop new understanding on the relationship between religion and secularism, identify models of successful citizenship and contribution, and formulate a robust and credible framework of successful living drawn from Islamic traditions, history and experiences.

SOCIETY

Family & Social Cohesion

Identify ways of supporting and strengthening the family institution and review laws as society evolves so that they remain resilient amidst these challenges, and how religions can be an efective resource in enriching further the common space and common good in any pluralistic society.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Biomedical ethics, new food technologies, digital technologies and ethics, crypto-currencies

Develop Islamic thought and ethics to provide new guidance on issues such as new food technologies, digital and financial technologies, environmental challenges and others.

Figure 6: RPCS's research pillars

KEY PROFILES

Chair of Advisory Panel

Mr Masagos Zulkifli

Mr Masagos Zulkifli is Singapore's Minister for Social and Family Development and Minister-in-Charge of Muslim Affairs. Mr Masagos has been a member of Parliament since 2006. He has held various positions in the Singapore Government, within the Ministries of Health, Education, Environment and Water Resources, Foreign Affairs and Home Affairs [24].

The Advisory Panel

The Advisory Panel ensures the college's relevance in contemporary religious education and research by providing expert guidance on global trends affecting Muslims, particularly in secular and advanced economies. It advises on educational standards, offers strategic direction for programmes, and identifies essential skills for future religious leaders. This approach keeps the college's initiatives cutting-edge, internationally aligned, and effective in nurturing future Islamic scholars and leaders in a global context.

[24] https://www.pmo.gov.sg/The-Cabinet/Mr-MASAGOS-Zulkifli

Chair of Board of Governors

Mr Abdullah Tarmugi

Mr Abdullah Tarmugi is a permanent member in the Presidential Council for Minority Rights. He was the Minister in-charge-of Muslim Affairs from 1993 to 2002 and has held several ministerial posts since 1996 to 2002. He was also the 7th Speaker of Singapore Parliament from 2002 to 2011. He sits on several boards and serves various non-profit entities and initiatives.

Board of Governors

The Board of Governors oversees the college's governance, strategic objectives, and resource planning, focusing on developing Asatizah and advancing Islamic thought in contemporary contexts. It endorses academic and research programmes, instils an ethical culture aligned with Singapore's norms, ensures financial integrity, and maintains transparency and accountability. Through these responsibilities, the Board guides the college in achieving its educational and research mission while fostering community trust and regulatory compliance.

Chair of Steering Committee

Dr Nazirudin Mohd Nasir

Dr Nazirudin Mohd Nasir has been the Mufti of Singapore since March 2020. He is a member of the Presidential Council for Minority Rights and the Presidential Council for Religious Harmony. He is also a member of the General Secretariat for Fatwa Authorities Worldwide under Dar al-Ifta, Egypt. He was academically trained in Islamic Law in Al-Azhar University and completed his postgraduate studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, and the University of Oxford.

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee establishes the college, implementing its programmes, policies, and resources. It sets strategic objectives, designs roadmaps for the undergraduate, executive, and research programmes, and develops frameworks for sustainable resourcing and governance. The committee ensures the college's effective implementation, aligning it with Islamic principles and Singapore's educational standards while maintaining efficiency and sustainability.

ABBREVIATIONS AND GLOSSARY

'alaihis salam (abbreviated as "a.s.")	Peace be upon him: An expression of respect used after mentioning the names of prophets or angels, such as Gabriel.
AMLA	Administration of Muslim Law Act: Singapore legislation governing Muslim religious affairs, establishing the Islamic Religious Council (MUIS) and the Syariah Court to oversee and adjudicate matters pertaining to Islamic law and practice within the country.
Shari'a (also spelt as *Syariah*)	Islamic law or jurisprudence.
السيرة النبوية (*Al-Seerah Al-Nabawiyyah*)	The prophetic biography: A detailed historical account of Prophet Muhammad's life, actions, and teachings.
السيرة والتاريخ (*Al-Seerah wa al-Tarikh*)	The comprehensive study of Islamic history, encompassing Prophet Muhammad's biography and Islamic civilisation's development.
العقيدة والأخلاق (*Al-'Aqidah wa al-Akhlak*)	Islamic creed and ethics
الفقه (*Al-Fiqh*)	Islamic jurisprudence
القرآن والحديث (*Al-Quran wa al-Hadith*)	The Holy Quran and prophetic traditions: The two sacred and primary sources of Islamic teachings and law.
ﷺ (*Sallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*)	Peace and blessings be upon him: An expression of respect used after mentioning Prophet Muhammad's name.
فقه المناكحات (*Fiqh al-Munakahat*)	Islamic matrimonial law
فقه المواريث (*Fiqh al-Mawarith*)	Islamic inheritance law
مقاصد الشريعة (*Maqasid Al-Shari'a*)	The higher objectives of Islamic law: The overarching objectives of Islamic law, primarily focused on preserving faith, life, intellect, lineage, and property.

Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura
Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (Muis)

273 Braddell Rd, Singapore Islamic Hub, Singapore 579702